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RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 0536
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0659
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY 0057
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI PRIORITY 0048
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY 0915
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0825
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 0609
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0486
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 6491
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 0024
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA PRIORITY 0043
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0634
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY 0433
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE PRIORITY 3460
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 0809
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI PRIORITY 5843
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0958
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0057
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 0072
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1016
RUEHNO/USDELMC BRUSSELS BE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/USNMR SHAPE BE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 000349

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [UK](#) [XG](#)

SUBJECT: NATO SEC GEN RASMUSSEN MAKES STATEMENT ON
CASUALTIES IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: KABUL 2359

Classified By: A/PolAd A. "Hoot" Baez. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) On August 16, Secretary General Rasmussen released a statement on casualties in Afghanistan. In the statement--which was posted on the NATO website--Rasmussen expressed sadness in the face of casualties, but argued that the "biggest tribute we can make to those who have lost their lives" is to help the Afghans "take greater control of their own destiny" and to work toward "achieving sustained peace and security in Afghanistan and the region." Reiterating NATO's resolve, he also stressed that "(s)tabilising Afghanistan to prevent the return of terrorism that threatens us all remains a critical security task."

¶2. (C/REL ISAF) The statement comes on the heels of two reminders of the dangers faced by the 42 NATO and non-NATO troop contributing nations that participate in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). On the morning of August 15, a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) detonated near the entrance to ISAF headquarters (reftel). While it appears that ISAF personnel were not among those killed in the explosion, the NATO Situation Centre reported that among those injured were

Canadian, Dutch, French (including a French civilian interpreter), Italian, Macedonian, and U.S. ISAF personnel. In addition, British deaths in Afghanistan passed the 200 mark over the weekend. Doubtless recognizing the political significance in the UK of this tragic milestone, Rasmussen began his statement with a special focus on the British losses.

13. (U) The full text of the Secretary General's statement follows:

BEGIN TEXT

16 Aug. 2009

Press Release: (2009) 117

Statement by the Secretary General of NATO on casualties in Afghanistan

As NATO Secretary General, it is with great sadness that I recognise that over 200 brave and professional British servicemen and women have now lost their lives in Afghanistan.

I feel these losses keenly, as I feel the losses of other nations serving in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force. My thoughts go out to all the families affected, as does my gratitude to the troop contributing nations as a whole for the essential contribution they are

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making to the international effort in Afghanistan.

This is indeed a heavy price to pay. Even in this time of sadness, I hope people can understand that these losses are suffered in a cause vital to the security of each of the 42 nations who comprise the NATO-led ISAF. ISAF now stands at over 64000 personnel and the Afghan National Security Forces continue to grow in strength and stature, taking an ever-increasing responsibility for their own security. They, and many of our ISAF Allies, have also suffered losses for which we share both pride and sorrow.

Stabilising Afghanistan to prevent the return of terrorism that threatens us all remains a critical security task. In recent months, the hard work and sacrifice of ISAF nations in support of the Afghan National Security Forces has focused on improving security to allow Afghans to participate in elections to be held on August 20. Helping Afghans to take greater control of their own destiny is both the right thing to do and is an important step in ensuring our shared goal of achieving sustained peace and security in Afghanistan and the region. This will be the biggest tribute we can make to those who have lost their lives. NATO's resolve will remain strong in the challenging months ahead.

END TEXT
DAALDER